

The Indonesian EFL Learners' Motivation and Autonomy

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Abstract: A successful autonomous learner is usually influenced by numerous factors. Motivation is one of the main factors that have a connection and the greatest influence associated with it. The research focuses to scrutinize the link between motivation in learning and learner autonomy of Indonesian learners in learning English. It also aims to identify the significant difference between gender and degree level of study in motivation and autonomy. The investigation was conducted using a sample of forty university students from some provinces in Indonesia. The participants were given a questionnaire to assess their motivation in and autonomy in learning English. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation and independent-samples T-test were operated in analyzing the data gotten. The statistical analysis results revealed a positive correlation between learning motivation and learner autonomy. It also found that insignificant difference between male and female and between undergraduate and postgraduate learners in motivation and autonomy. The result of the research recommends the vigorous role of motivation and autonomy in teaching English especially in the EFL context. They should have plenty of attention, as they may direct to more efficacious pedagogy.

Keywords: Autonomy; Correlational Study, EFL Learners, Motivation; Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students

Abstrak: Pembelajaran mandiri yang sukses biasanya dipengaruhi oleh banyak faktor. Motivasi merupakan salah satu faktor utama yang memiliki keterkaitan dan pengaruh terbesar yang terkait dengannya. Penelitian ini berfokus untuk melihat hubungan antara motivasi dan kemandirian pembelajar pada pembelajar EFL Indonesia. Penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi apakah ada perbedaan yang signifikan antara jenis kelamin dan tingkat studi dalam motivasi dan otonomi. Investigasi dilakukan dengan menggunakan sampel 40 mahasiswa EFL dari beberapa daerah di Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner dan dianalisis menggunakan Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation dan independent-samples T-test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada hubungan positif antara motivasi belajar dengan kemandirian belajar. Hasil independent sample T-test menunjukkan tidak ada perbedaan yang signifikan antara mahasiswa laki-laki dan perempuan dalam hal motivasi dan kemandirian, serta tidak ada perbedaan yang signifikan antara mahasiswa S1 dan S2 dalam motivasi dan kemandirian. Hasil penelitian merekomendasikan peran vital motivasi dan otonomi dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris terutama dalam konteks EFL. Kedua hal ini yaitu motivasi dan kemandirian belajar harus mendapat perhatian besar, karena mereka dapat mengarah pada pengajaran dan pembelajaran yang lebih efektif.

Keywords: Otonomi; Studi Korelasi, Pembelajar EFL, Motivasi; Mahasiswa Sarjana dan Pascasarjana

INTRODUCTION

The English language is indeed indispensable for communication in this era of globalization. It uses for various purposes and situations (McKay, 2012). For example, international trade, international education, intercultural relations, and business. This phenomenon clarifies the position of English has become one of the most international languages used by people around

the world. In Indonesia, English is a well-accepted foreign language. It is spoken and learned not only by students but also by ordinary people. Since English is a foreign language in Indonesia, learning English could be challenging for students. They often perceive that learning English is a complicated process because of some factors, such as motivation and learning strategies (Dörnyei, 2018).

It is undeniable that motivation shows a major role in learning English. Many researchers have examined that motivation is one of the aspects determining the success of second or foreign language learning (Bravo et al., 2017; Dörnyei, 1998, 2018; Teng, 2019; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023). Motivation is also a major contributor to language achievement (Noels et al., 2000). Learners who have strong motivation can learn a language better, tend to be successful, and can make good achievements. So, it can be said that motivation is pivotal in determining their success or failure in learning English.

In addition, motivation is understood as a main factor that influences learner autonomy (Dörnyei, 2001; Liu, 2015) and determines how far learners are ready to learn autonomously (Spratt et al., 2002). Motivation, according to (Cotterall, 1999; Lengkanawati, 2016) is crucial for the cultivation of autonomous learning. While (Ushioda, 2006) contends that autonomous learners are motivated learners. Motivated learners are students who invest their time and pull out efforts in learning, responsible for a task in hand, have a specific goal, and use strategy in learning to achieve the goals (Lengkanawati, 2017, 2014b). Chan et al., (2002) argue that motivated language learners are more responsible for their learning and have decision-making abilities. All of these features describe the autonomous learner. Autonomous learners know how to learn effectively. They perceive that their learning success is determined by their effort and strategies (Dickinson, 1995; Lengkanawati, 2014a). It means that language learner puts effort into their learning and applies several learning strategies in purpose to succeed in their learning. So, it can be summarized that there is a positive affiliation between autonomy and motivation.

Many research findings confirm that motivation correlates with students' achievement or academic performances (Syafrizal et al., 2020; Alhadi & Saputra, 2017; Nasihah & Cahyono, 2017; Pajares, 2003; Salikin et al., 2017; Xia & Zhenghou, 2015). Further, research investigating the link between motivation and learner autonomy has been conducted by many scholars in second or foreign language learning (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023; Bravo et al., 2017; Chan et al., 2009; Dickinson, 1995; Jianfeng et al., 2018; Liu, 2015; Spratt et al., 2002; Wang & Ryan, 2020). In Indonesia, research investigating the correlation of motivation and learner autonomy is still difficult to find out. If any, the study mainly focused on the relation learning motivation and the four English skills achievement, learning outcome, language learning strategies (Juliana et al., 2022; Nasihah & Cahyono, 2017; Salikin et al., 2017). Taking this as the point, this research emphasizes on investigating the university students' motivation and autonomy and its relationships.

METHOD

Learning Motivation

Motivation can be defined as a thing that can elevate students' interest in learning the language. According to Gardner (2004), motivation is the mixture of exertion plus want to attain the goals in language Learning. Besides, Motivation is something important to make students learn and keep them learning (Brown, 2001). Motivation comes from the students' inside and external facets and can easily be linked to social experiences.

Motivation is categorized into integrative and instrumental (Dickinson, 1995). Integrative motivation is an essential requirement for successful learning (Brown, 2001). It refers to a learner's desire to learn the second language, to know more about the culture, and to make contact with the speaker of the language. Further, he explains that instrumental motivation is learners' motivation to acquire language for their career, reading technical material, translating a text, and so forth. Similar to (Lee, 1998), instrumental motivation is learners are motivated to learn the

second language because for several aims such as the motivation to get a good job and career, improve social status, and continue the study. Students' desire to acquire something practical or concrete from second language studies is a feature of instrumental motivation. Learners acquire English for different practical reasons such as for a job application or meeting academic requirements when applying for higher learning institutions.

Ryan & Deci (2000) distinguish motivation between intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is learners' internal desires to do any kind of activity because they like it or enjoy it. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is learners do any activities, not for enjoyment but maybe they are pressured to do them. For instance, learners taking part in several learning activities to obtain a prize or elude a sanction. Students' who have high motivation enjoy their learning compared with who have less motivation. They actively take part in any activities, able to manage their study time, and tend to make the best results (Liu, 2015).

Learner Autonomy

The issue of learner autonomy (LA) was introduced by (Holec, 1981) along with a task he was working on for the Council of Europe. After that LA has been a prominent theme in the area of foreign languages and teaching and learning. Holec (1981) delineates LA as the ability to take responsibility for one's learning. In this case, students are responsible for their own learning. For example, setting goals in learning, determining material and procedures, choosing methods and techniques that will be employed, and assessing learning. Lee (1998) explains the definition of Holec is focuses on the selection of content and methods in learning to achieve learning objectives. It can be said that autonomous learners know how to learn effectively. Besides, students have the power and right to learn on their own (Chik et al., 2017). Littlewood (1999) defines autonomous learning as the ability and willingness to take responsibility for learning. Besides, Dickinson (1995) says that autonomy perceived as an attitude towards learning in which students are equipped to take, or does take, charge for their learning. It can be understood that the key point of learner autonomy is that learners must be in authority for their own learning.

According to (Amir, 2018; Lengkanawati, 2017; Melvina Melvina & Suherdi, 2019), in autonomous learning, learners practice strategies of language learning to assist them become autonomous in language learning. Learners who can use various strategies in language learning certainly enable them to have more satisfactory learning results. In a similar vein, Wang and Ryan (2020) mention that autonomous learners have the capacity for being active and independent in the process of learning. Further, they explain that autonomous learners can identify and formulate goals, change goals to suit learning needs and interests, and able to use learning strategies and to monitor learning.

Learner autonomy leads the learner to learn independently. Holec (1981) as cited in (Dickinson, 1995) explains that to carry out an independent learning program, autonomous learners need capacities such as critical reflection and decision making. Not only have those capacities but also must have skills such as the ability to determine learning objectives, define content and methods. Similarly, learner autonomy helps students to learn independently with little support from teachers because they can make decisions about how they learn (Keuk & Heng, 2016; M Melvina & Julia, 2021). In conclusion, several key concepts of learner autonomy including the learner freedom, learner commitment, and learner preference. United with these aspects, such as making decisions and critical reflection.

Links between Motivation and Autonomy

Several researches have been led to discover the association between motivation and autonomy. Spratt et al., (2002) investigated the relationships autonomy and motivation in language acquisition. They found that there were strong relationships between motivation and frequency of engagement in autonomous learning activities outside the classroom. Also, they further explained that motivated learners were more prepared and capable grump responsibilities in the language-learning process. Deci and Ryan (2000) held that intrinsic motivation comes from

circumstances where learners have the occasion to take responsibility for learning, and taking responsibility is one of the key concepts of student autonomy. In addition, Vandergrift (2005) argues that autonomy precedes motivation. While, (Lin et al., 2017) found that learning motivation can help to promote learner autonomy. Cheng (2019); Salehi & Daleli (2017); Liu (2015) showed that learning motivation and autonomy were suggestively and confidently related with each other.

The review of the previous literature shows that there exist close relationships between learning motivation and learner autonomy. The previous research has been conducted by many researchers in a second and foreign language. In Indonesia, research examining the relationship between motivation and autonomy are still rare. Majority, the research focus on teacher's belief and practice towards learner autonomy (Agustina, 2017; Lengkanawati, 2016) and students' readiness toward learner autonomy (Cirocki et al., 2019). This study goes to fill in this gap by addressing three research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between the motivation and autonomy of Indonesian university EFL students?
2. Is there a difference between male and female learners in motivation and autonomy?
3. Is there a difference between undergraduate and postgraduate students in motivation and autonomy?

METHOD

The present study applied quantitative research. In quantitative research, statistics are used to evaluate the data (Creswell, 2012). The participants of the research comprised 40 Indonesian EFL male and female undergraduate and postgraduate learners majoring in English Language Teaching. They came from some regions in Indonesia such as Padang, Medan, Aceh, Riau, Bandung, Kediri, Tulung Agung, and Jakarta. There were 7 males and 33 females. Undergraduate learners were 29 and post-graduate learners were 11. They were taken based on a convenience sampling technique.

Table 1. Participants' Profile

	Frequency	Percent
Male	7	17.5
Female	33	82.5
N	40	100.0
Undergraduate	29	72.5
Postgraduate	11	27.5
N	40	100.0

This study used questionnaire, which was divided into 3 sections. Section 1 is the demographic background and asked information about gender, city of the living, university, and degree. The section 2 asked the respondents about learning motivation. The third part is the learner autonomy. The motivation questionnaire was adapted from Noels, Pelletier, Clement, and Valler (Noels et al., 2000). There were eighteen items with a five-point Likert scale, from strongly agree to strongly disagree. While the learner autonomy questionnaire was adapted from Zhang and Li (Zhang & Xiaoxiang, 2004). It consisted of 11 statements with a five-point Likert scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always). The items of questionnaire were translated into Indonesian, and the translation was supervised by a professor from Indonesia who is expert in learner autonomy. Two items that were not associated to the context of Indonesia were deleted based on professor suggestion.

The researchers distributed the form of questionnaire to University EFL learners through Google form. The data collection process took two weeks. The university students were requested to fill the questionnaire during a couple of weeks. The researchers sent a second message via WhatsApp to thank those who had responded and also to remind those who had not responded to the survey three days before the deadline. 40 university students (7 males and 33 females) from Padang, Medan, Aceh, Riau, Bandung, Kediri, Tulung Agung, and Jakarta accomplished the questionnaires. After the data had been collected, they were categorized in terms of motivation, autonomy, gender and degree.

IBM SPSS statistic Version 20 was operated in analyzing the data got together from the survey. To response the main research question, analysis of Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was employed in finding the correlation between motivation and autonomy. An Independent sample t-test was employed to response the second and the third questions that addressed in this research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Relationship between Learning Motivation and Learner Autonomy

In order to find out the relationship between learning motivation and learner autonomy, the researchers applied the Pearson product-moment correlation. The result is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlations between Motivation and Autonomy

		Motivation	Autonomy
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.530**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	40	40
Autonomy	Pearson Correlation	.530**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	40	40

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 2, the correlation value between motivation and autonomy was moderate with $r = 0.530$. The significant value (2-tailed) was 0.000 which was lower than 0.05. Based on this result, there was a positive and significant correlation between the two variables. This result indicated that students who were motivated in English learning they would have better learning autonomy.

The findings of the research is in line with the findings of the research piloted by (Tabssam & Azhar, 2022), (Liu, 2015), (Chen, 2015), (Salehi & Dalili, 2017), and (Jianfeng et al., 2018) which showed the positive correlation between learning motivation and learner autonomy. Motivation plays a dominant role in affecting learner autonomy in learning a language. Some researchers (Fazey & Fazey, 2001; Fukuda et al., 2011; Van Nguyen & Habók, 2021) agree that students most likely will not become autonomous learners if they are unmotivated. Besides, they argue that increasing intrinsic motivation is needed to raise autonomy. Similar to the results of Spratt et al., (2002) study, they concluded that language teachers need to develop learning motivation first, especially in cases where the situation students refuse to be actively involved in autonomous practices or situations where students avoid learning opportunities. Thus, language teachers are advised to develop motivation for learning and help learners to be certain of in the effectiveness of their efforts. They also recommend language teachers to include a selection of motivating actions where learner-centeredness as a sign to learner autonomy can be included. Omar et all., (2021) also mention that a teacher a person who makes important decisions have the responsibility not only to teach but also to guide and motivate learners during the course. Correspondingly, learners would rely on lecturers in helping them to improve English skills.

The Differences between Gender in Motivation and Autonomy

To find out the differences between male and female learners in motivation and autonomy, the researchers used an independent sample-t-test. In the initial, the researchers tried to find out the mean score of male and female learners' motivation and autonomy.

Table 3. Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Motivation	Male	7	63.00	18.403	6.956
	Female	33	72.91	10.462	1.821

As shown in Table 3, the mean score of male learners was 63.00 and the mean score of female learners was 72.91. Based on this result, it can be concluded that female learners had a higher level of motivation. Further, the result of the t-test showed there was no significant difference between male and female learners' motivation. The sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.056 which was higher than 0.05. Accordingly, there was no significant difference in motivation between male and female learners. It inferred that male and female learners' motivation in English learning was equal. It indicated that learning motivation did not be determined by on the learners' sexual category. Furthermore, it can be argued that both male and female learners are concerned in what they are learning and then they try to do best on it. Thus, their motivation in learning the language is equal. This finding is compatible with the results of the studies conducted by (Agustrianti et al., 2016) in which they found that both of them inclined to have equivalence motivation in learning English. However, the findings is not similar to the findings of (Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013). They explained that female students have higher level compare to male of foreign language learning motivation

Table 4. Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Autonomy	Male	7	34,43	8,541	3,228
	Female	33	37,94	7,267	1,265

In Table 4, it can be seen that the mean score of male learners was 34.43 and female learners was 37.94. Based on this computation, female learners' autonomy scores were greater compare to male learners' scores. To clarify the difference between male and female learners' autonomy, independent sample t-test was run. The results of the independent sample t-test showed that the sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.267 which was higher than 0.05. Based on the statistical results it can be said that there was insignificant difference in autonomy scores both of them. It means that they are at the same level. Both males and females consider themselves to have the ability to learn independently. Besides, it seems that they realize the importance of learner autonomy for life-long learning which can help them to compete in the global world after graduating from university. The result is consistent with Cabugsa (2022) and Varol and Yilmaz (2010) result. They reported that there is insignificant difference between men and women regarding their learning process as independent learners. In addition, Abdel Razaq (2014) found a gap between male and female students regarding their learning activities as independent learners. In contrast to this, Mardjuki (2018) reports that there are no clear gender-based differences related to learning ventures and challenges as independent learners.

The Differences between Undergraduate and Postgraduate Learners in Motivation and Autonomy

In this study, the researchers also investigated the relation of motivation and autonomy of undergraduate and postgraduate learners through independent sample t-test.

Table 5. Group Statistics

	Degree	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Motivation	Undergraduate	29	70.83	12.734	2.365
	Postgraduate	11	72.09	12.446	3.752

Table 5 showed the mean scores of undergraduate learners were 70.83 and the mean scores of postgraduate learners were 72.09. It is visualized obviously that the mean scores of postgraduate learners were greater than undergraduate learners. The results of the independent sample t-test showed that the sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.780 which was higher than 0.05. Accordingly, there was no remarkable difference in motivation between undergraduate and postgraduate learners. Both undergraduate and postgraduate learners have the same level of motivation, particularly in this present study. This is probably because of the importance the using English to communicate or solve problems in the future. The result of the present study is quite similar to Omar et al., (2021) research. They found that academic motivation levels of university students in Malaysia and Indonesia were high. Majority of the respondents in that study were in control over the learning process. However, the findings of this research are not inline with the results of research informed by (Sarani & Shirzaei, 2016), which revealed that both undergraduate and postgraduate students significantly have different level motivation in learning English by using vocabulary learning strategies. Meanwhile, Fazey & Fazey (2001) agree that advanced students are well-motivated because they are more intrinsically motivated than younger students.

Table 6. Group Statistics

	Degree	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Autonomy	Undergraduate	29	36,00	6,682	1,241
	Postgraduate	11	40,82	8,739	2,635

Table 6 showed the mean and standard deviation scores for undergraduate learners were 36.00, 6.682; and for postgraduate learners were 40.82, 8.739. From the calculation, it can be seen that the score of autonomy for undergraduate students were lower than sore of postgraduate students.

Then, the sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.069 which was higher than 0.05. Based on the statistical results that sig. (2-tailed) $0.069 > 0.05$ it can be said that there is no momentous difference in autonomy scores between undergraduate and postgraduate learners. This result is compatible with the results of the studies conducted by (Yan, 2007), in which she found that postgraduate learners commonly possess positive perspectives toward autonomous English learning. Meanwhile, (Gürses, 2021) argues that undergraduate students are capable to be independent in learning English. Here, teachers must construct the learning situation to foster undergraduate potency. So, it can be said that University students can learn autonomously if allowed to do so. It is supported by Stephenson & Laycock as cited in (Fazey & Fazey, 2001), who stated that the ability to reflect, study and conduct yourself autonomously is customarily call for as an outcome for learner in tertiary education. Therefore undergraduate and postgraduate students who arrived at university are potential to be autonomous learners. In this case, teachers have to assist and guide them to

enhance their autonomy as much as possible and to advance the capability to take charge for their own learning.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This present study investigated the association between learners' motivation and autonomy in learning English as a foreign language. In addition, it also tried to scrutinize the disparity between gender and degree level of study. The analysis results revealed that there is a positive correlation between learning motivation and learner autonomy. It indicates that motivation influenced the autonomy of Indonesian EFL learners. The findings of the study answered the research questions that there are insignificant differences between male and female, graduate and postgraduate learners in motivation and autonomy. Considering the relationships between motivation and autonomy it is crucial to pay attention to these factors in foreign language learning and teaching. In conclusion, the current study suggests language teachers include a series of motivating activities in teaching and learning English. Also, they should more focus on how to help learners to motivate themselves rather than motivate learners. Motivated learners are supposed to be independent. In similar vein the autonomous learners are independent. Therefore, motivation is the key to fostering successful autonomous learning. For further research, it is suggested to work by using mixed method research to obtained both quantitative and qualitative data.

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